

VAB Programs: VAB's Student Clubs Program

Student Club had been a novel attempt when VAB started initiating the formation of Debate Club and Sports Club in different schools in 2013. Debate Clubs and Sports Clubs were initiated for the purpose of training larger stream of students in debate and sports activities, respectively. Schools had no regular programs and school teams were formed with students who had some abilities developed with their own efforts. Teachers would organize a few routine programs to fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Education.

VAB went through a learning curve in designing an effective Club in the rural high school. The lessons learned allowed a general procedure to set up an effective club in a three-step process.

a. Formation of Leadership Group

Before the idea of a Club is introduced, a Leadership Group for a Club in each field is formed from every class. VAB recommends a group of ten students from each class, forming a Leadership Group of fifty students for that Club. These students are trained in the activities of the intended Club and are asked to hone their skills in Club activities through practice, following the pathway shown in the training. Self-driven practice is made the cornerstone of the training message. The Groups are then given the responsibility to transfer the methodology of self-training to their classmates in groups of five to seven. The idea of formation of a Club and how a Club should function is introduced to them at the end of six months or before the year expires so that the Club is formed at the beginning of the next year.

b. Ownership of the School

Like all VAB programs, to ensure success, the commitment of the school is obtained through participative discussion. Operation of the Leadership Group provides evidence of the feasibility of student club. Ideas are shared through participative discussions with all stakeholders. The Headmaster and the Management Committee make a commitment to support the Club program, and as a first step, engage an enthusiastic teacher as Adviser to the Club, one for each Club.

c. Develop an Organizational Structure

The loosely structured organizational set up instituted by VAB in the earlier stages did not work well. And so, a definite organizational structure was set up with assignment of clear roles and responsibilities.

One significant innovation in the management structure was to form an Advisory Board for the Clubs that will advise and oversee all the Clubs. All Clubs will have some financial needs. VAB found that when a school team becomes champion at the upazila or district level, the Headmaster is often reluctant to send the team to the next higher level because of additional funds needed to do so. VAB intends to strengthen

the hands of the Headmaster in seeking out funds, sharing responsibility with the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board of the Club will have members from the Management Committee as well as community leaders who will really become patrons of the Club, with a mission to provide all opportunities to students to nurture the talents of the students to reach their level of attainments.

Structure of the Club

The Club is formed when the preconditions described above are fulfilled. The Leadership Group forms the core membership of the Club. VAB is now promoting five clubs for students: English, Computer, Sports, Debate and Volunteering. All schools now have clubs on English, Sports, Debate and Volunteering. Computer Clubs are being established in schools equipped with a Computer Lab with at least ten computers.

Composition of Student Clubs

1. **Advisory Board** (One Advisory Board for all Clubs)
2. **Chief Adviser** for all Clubs: Headmaster
3. **Adviser (for each Club):** An enthusiastic teacher will be an adviser for each club.
4. **Student Bodies (for each Club)**
 - a. **Club Members** – The 50 students of the Leadership Groups (10 from each class) will be the core members of the Club.
 - b. **Class Representatives** - The Leadership Group of each class will elect/select two enthusiastic students having interest in management and organization to be Class Representatives. They will be designated as Leader and Co-Leader for the Class.
 - c. **Executive Committee:** The Class Representatives from the five classes will constitute the ten-member Executive Committee of the Club.

Criteria of Selection of Advisers

- Enthusiasm and commitment to help students develop skills in the area of Club specialty, as well as in general life skills
- Commitment to give time and thought for the success of the Club
- Enthusiasm to help students participate in competitions at different levels

Criteria of Selection of Class Representative

- Interest and ability in organizational work
- Ability to work with others
- Proficiency in club programs

- Believing in Quality for All and desire to work for that
- Engagement exclusively in the Executive Committee, with no other organizational work elsewhere

Function of Advisory Committee

- Patronize the Clubs in performing their tasks, through advice and funds
- Meet at least once a year to review the performance of the Clubs

Function of the Adviser of each Club

The Adviser is the key to the success of the Club. The challenge of the Adviser is to guide the club so that within a year, the Executive Committee can take over all responsibilities of the club, relieving a large part his/her load.

- Provide guidance to the Club to run the Club effectively
- Encourage, mentor and inspire students to design, plan and implement Club activities with minimum input from him/her
- Give approval of activities and seek approval, if needed, from higher authorities
- Arrange access to school facilities beyond school hours, and during holidays and vacations
- Get the students to plan and do all work, overseeing mainly discipline, and adherence to school rules and social norms

Function of Class Representatives

- Practice sessions and competitions for the Club Members in the Class for excellence, through self-initiated efforts using the pathway demonstrated in training
- Training of classmates how to get trained through self-driven practice

Function of the Executive Committee of each Club

- The Executive Committee is responsible for all activities of the Club
- It will elect a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer
- It will design, plan and implement all activities of the Club for the year
- It will organize all competitions – in-school, inter-class, school-wide and inter-school
- It will help form teams for regional and national competitions
- The Executive Committee will meet once in a month to review the program of the Club
- The Executive Committee may chalk out a six-month program for the Club
- The **President** will get prior approval of the Adviser for conducting a competition

- The **Secretary** will be responsible for keeping records and oversee that the Class Representatives keep records of their activities
- The Secretary, in consultation with the respective Adviser and the President, will call an Annual Meeting of the Club
- The **Treasurer** will maintain the accounts and disburse funds with written notes from the President

Every member including the Executive Committee members will pay a membership subscription decided by the Advisory Board for Clubs. Any member can pay for the whole year at one time, if desired.

There will be some difference in modality of work because of the nature of the particular club in question. The above is a general guideline.

The Student Clubs created a dynamic and inviting environment to engage students actively and with interest in different co-curricular and extracurricular activities with an intrinsic benefit of acquiring some competencies and soft skills. The clubs operate with the motto - **Quality for All; Excellence for Team.**

The Clubs are mandated not only to train the members, they are also given the responsibility of opening doors to all students and guide them to practice different activities of the Club.

VAB trains and advises teachers and Club executives how to run an effective Club. Teachers are specially requested to nurture and mentor Club activities so that the students can take over bulk of the load. Students should be trained to plan, design and implement all regular activities as well as competitions. VAB aims to put the students in the driver's seat so that they require only guidance and approval from the teachers.

All rural schools operate with shortage of staff; teachers really do not have time to devote to other helpful activities for students. The teacher adviser will guide and train the club executives to take over the management of the club in the initial months. This will then create a more manageable workload for the adviser.

Club Features

- Well-developed organization of the Club as an entity
- Student-centric management and operation by students with a teacher as Adviser and facilitator
- Well defined programs
- Practice and competitions in-class, inter-class, school wide and inter-school

- Teams in every class. In-class participation and practice of all or selected classmates by members of each Club in that class
- Monitoring, Documentation, Evaluation and Reward
- Participation at regional and national level competitions (schools enable teams to participate)
- Creation of success stories and raising expectation

Resources Required

- Commitment of School Management and Advisory Board of the Club
- Enthusiasm and Commitment of Adviser
- Interest and Energy of Students
- Opportunity for Practice and Training
- Availability of a Club Office, Equipment, particularly for Sports Clubs.

Purpose

- Create opportunities to develop student skills in communication, problem solving, critical thinking, leadership and teamwork
- Promote excellence in student performance in co-academic activities in English, Computer and Math as self-driven efforts, removed from the burden of tests, in addition to debate, sports and other co-curricular activities
- Infuse spirit of tolerance, respect, empathy and trust.

Strategy

- Engagement of and networking through significant stakeholders like parents, teachers, management committee members, community leaders through an Advisory Board (One common Advisory Board covering all the five Clubs of the school)
- Formation of Teams in every class under each Club. Practice and participation in competitions in-class, inter-class, school-wide and interschool, and at regional and national level competitions.
- Wide dissemination of success stories of student performance to generate enthusiasm and interest in the school and the community

d. General Description of the Five Clubs

English Club

“English Club” has proven to be an effective medium of English proficiency development in VAB schools. VAB considered this as a critical skill for students to acquire as they prepare themselves for higher education or working careers in the government, private or service sector. Weak proficiency in English (spoken and written) poses a formidable barrier for their prospecting for a meaningful job or career.

English Club has been set up in all schools. Upon completion of training, the onus falls on the Club for sustaining the practice and pushing for further skills and excellence. The Club designs different programs for practice. The Leadership Group described earlier constitutes the Club membership.

The proficiency program covers all core elements of learning English: Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Spelling, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The Club has a year-round activity to improve English Language skill of its members and all students. The Club holds competitions to select the best teams in spelling, conversation and recitation in the initial phase, moving to more challenging items as it matures. The best teams from five clubs in the nearby cluster of village schools compete and the best two teams are selected in each category. VAB holds the final competition either during the Education Fair or at some convenient date.

Resources provided for English Club

English language skill is the greatest deficiency of the rural students even when they successfully enter a promising career. Skill in the use of English is perceived in the society as a sign of accomplishment and smartness and it boosts the morale of the students towards further accomplishments.

Interestingly, VAB discovered that the attainment of this skill is very much within the capacity of each and every student, provided they have the guidance, inspiration and pathway.

VAB pays considerable attention to drive the students towards success in English. It provides some amount of resource materials and points to supplementary materials to further enhance their skills.

Typically, English Club is provided the following resource materials by VAB.

Books

1. Road to Learning English Language – VAB Publication
2. Mushfiqur Rahman - Limericks – a fun way to practice pronunciation, VAB Publication
3. Amin Rahman– English Pronunciation Guide Book for Native Bengali Speakers - *This and the dictionary below are excellent for phonetic pronunciation*
4. Amin Rahman – English Pronunciation Dictionary for Bangalees
5. Raymond Murphy, Essential English Grammar
6. Fr. Frank J. Quinlivan, C.S.C., Essential English Vocabulary – Notre Dame University publication

7. Collection of Reading for Pleasure series by BSK (Bishwo Shahitto Kendro)

Uploaded from the Internet

Videos in YouTube

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4NVPg2kHv4> – Pronunciation
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYb0LCqqJbU> - 3 hours - Spoken English – Listening Practice

English rhymes and poems

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UVozY9dq58> – 1 h 50 m – Children’s rhymes

English stories

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyN2rw2uU58> – 11 Disney stories
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byKELv7gcDE> – Short Stories

Movies

6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLTFr_KqVLE&t=1477s – About Helen Keller (American author, political activist, and lecturer. She was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.)
7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fR05_ngoltM – Movie: The Triumph – about a teacher
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMrMILXMUaQ> – Movie: Beauty and the Beast

English Club Training Activities and Games

The skills training is designed by Clubs and offered in a regular and interactive manner. A few items from the following list of activities and games are covered in each hour-long session. A typical training session will cover a combination of the following:

- **Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Spelling**

Vocabulary – Use the techniques in ‘Road to Learning English’ and other resource materials cited above. Your textbooks are ready resources always available to you. *Master the use of new words by constructing multiple sentences and repeating them. Create a visual image of the word – do not try to memorize the meaning in Bangla.*

Pronunciation – Use dictionary, ask a friend or teacher, ask Google (get help from any well-wisher who has a Smart Phone with net connection), listen to resources provided in DVD, keep a notebook to record your new vocabulary.

Vocabulary Game —Each of the ten members of the Leadership Group in a class will come prepared with two words new to him/her. The member will learn the correct pronunciation from dictionary or from the teacher or from Google and come prepared with two sentences that describe

the meaning of the words. Each member will then be challenged to compose similar sentences. Other methods of building vocabulary as indicated in 'Road to Learning' will also be taken up.

Spelling – Use the spelling rules given in "Road to Learning", follow the directions given in Textbook and Grammar and Composition Book, write new words, and review your vocabulary notebook. Challenge yourself in Spelling Bee.

Spelling Game – Each of the ten members in a class will come prepared with two interesting "spelling madness" or two patterns of spelling, new to the member. They challenge each other and learn. Words having similar spelling but differing pronunciation will be chosen in this game.

- **Listening and Speaking**

Listening – Listen to others speaking; have a conversation; listen to Radio or TV news, DVD, and YouTube videos downloaded in DVD.

Speaking – Read, enjoy and act out any conversation from your Textbook. Get a grasp on how to make full sentences in a conversation. Practice techniques of introducing yourself, Role Play, Show and Tell and Telephone conversation, as shown in "Road to Learning English". Do all the exercises in your Textbook and practice them orally yourself, with your friend or in a group.

Recitation of Limericks – Use the booklet by Mushfiqur Rahman. Listen to the recitation given in DVD.

Discuss a story or a book – Choose books from "Reading for Pleasure" series or books in DVD provided.

Tell me Game – A member asks another member: Tell me about your parents. This can go on for brothers and sisters, friends, family, village, school and so on. It could also be about an event – your sister's wedding, a Mela in your village, a function you attended or what you did today.

Question and Answer Game – A member will ask a question to another member. A third member will put the same question in a different manner. A fourth member will answer in a different manner. The questions will be rephrased, so also the answers. The questions could be serious or lighthearted or humorous. Some members can raise the level of difficulties, posing the questions in different tenses.

Show and Tell – Follow 'Road to Learning English'.

Multiple sentences with a word – Pick a word, e.g. a Verb, and use it to make a variety of sentences.

- **Reading**

Reading Practice – Read your Textbook, book on grammar and composition, stories and other books more than once to have fluency with understanding. Follow books in “Reading for Pleasure” series, and books given to you in DVD.

- **Writing**

Grammar and Composition – Read chapters on Parts of Speech and Tenses from your Textbook. Develop command over correct use of tenses, different sentence structures, and master use of Prepositions and Articles, Prefixes and Suffixes. Use “Road to Learning English” and your Grammar and Composition book as guide and resource.

Why Care about Nouns and Verbs – List some examples showing how usual mistakes with nouns and verbs can be avoided. For conjugation, pick a sentence and then change person or tense and challenge another person to express the sentence.

Hunt for Adjectives, Adverbs, and Prepositions – Pick a noun and choose appropriate **adjectives**. Pick an adjective and a verb, and choose appropriate **adverbs**. List some examples showing common mistakes with prepositions.

Determine the Parts of Speech for the different words in a sentence – Match your answers with those from the dictionary for a given word. You may need help from your teacher to determine the correct answer.

Writing Practice – (i) Your first step is to write answers to questions in your textbook. Practice writing paragraphs and essays. Use the techniques in “Road to Learning” and your book on “Grammar and Composition”. (ii) Choose a topic and write about it and read it out to your group. (iii) Write every day.

Computer Club

Computer Club aims to take the students forward in the use of computers to bring forth the benefits of learning from the resources in the Internet. VAB in-house trainers are capable of offering training to the Club members in searching for important resources using Google and other search engines, in presentation skills, video editing skills, brochure design, web design, software installation and basic computer troubleshooting. With assistance from external trainers, students will also be introduced to developments in software with some grooming in coding, gaming and other advanced topics where the students can learn with fun and amusement. Moreover, there are online contests in above areas where

students can enthusiastically involve themselves, sharpen their skill to be at par with their counterparts in the advanced countries and develop a sense of being members of the global community.

Debate Club

The purpose of the Debate Club is to promote ability for cognitive thinking, articulating reasoning and communication skills of students. In the process, it enhances their language skills, confidence in public speaking and social awareness. The Club members are also encouraged to organize and participate in cultural programs like recitation, songs, dance and dramatic performance.

The members of the Clubs benefit from training by external trainers, and are provided with support resources to hone their skills in debating, like books and guidance notes, DVDs/videos containing tutorials for debate.

Operation of Debate Club

The class representatives (leader and co-leader) organize practice sessions for its members. Each class will have more than one team to compete against each other. The in-class debates and practice sessions will be managed and documented by the class representatives. Documentation of all interclass and interschool competitions will be maintained by the Club Secretary.

Interclass competitions will draw the best teams from each class. The school will select its team from among best debating Club members for inter-school or outside competitions. The winners in inter-school competition will be specially recognized in school events and magazines.

Sports Club

The Sports Club will have at least four teams: two junior and two senior teams in each of Cricket and Football. The teams are trained by the physical education teacher of the school, and also by external coaches through a scheduled program of practice over the year. The Club will provide opportunities and motivation for all students to undertake sports activities. It will help select and mobilize excellent teams for internal competitions. A school team comprising the best performers will compete on behalf of the school with teams from other schools. The best teams within the school and the school team itself will be specially recognized. For co-ed schools, separate teams will be formed for boys and girls.

Volunteering Club

Institutional volunteering activity is not a widely practiced phenomenon in Bangladesh. Volunteering initiatives, much like philanthropy, emerge to respond to specific needs in difficult times. Individual or group volunteering activities are visible as a part of social norm.

In a school environment the Volunteering Club is formed in a participatory manner with 50 students (10 from each class). The process includes a Club launching meeting, with discussions on concept and importance of volunteering (the why), and how one may volunteer. The students work out in groups to explore what volunteering activities they could possibly undertake. Experience showed that the students generally have a good grasp of what volunteering work they can do, the benefits to the society and even to themselves. VAB builds on that positive force.

Members of the Club will keep record of volunteering work. The Executive Committee will meet once a month to monitor the Community Project, report progress and discuss new initiatives, if planned. The Club will try to undertake at least two community level volunteering project in a year. If any community project requires any consultation with community leaders and government officials, the Headmaster as the Chief Adviser of all Clubs would facilitate such discussion. Whenever possible, efforts should be made to publicize successful Community Projects that students carry out.

A consensus is reached to keep the activities within a limited framework. The Club will design an annual plan of activities under four broad themes:

Clean School, Green School. A routine program to keep the school compound and classrooms clean will be devised and executed. Depending on the space available, gardening and tree planting programs will be taken up and executed. The Club will take responsibility to cater all needs of the activities including nurturing and regular maintenance of the garden.

One Volunteer, One Tree. Each volunteer will plant at least one tree in his/her house and take responsibility for it. Every member of the Club will have a responsibility to encourage and inspire five other classmates to do the same. The volunteer can also encourage students and community members of the village to plant trees. The Club will take a leading role in the school in supporting Tree Plantation Drive undertaken nationally.

Save the Family, Save the Community. The Club will take up awareness campaign on various family and social issues. They can design attractive posters and take out rallies in villages and bazars, accompanied by a teacher. The rallies could raise awareness regarding Family Violence, Safety and Security of Girls, Stopping Early Marriage, No to Dowry, No to Addiction, No to Smoking, No to Corruption, No to Abuse, etc. Students may be encouraged to have creative way of composing the message, but should be vetted by the Adviser before display.

Community Project. The Club will take up two Community Projects for the whole year in consultation with community leaders. They would design the project, implement it and will produce a written report on it. The selection of the project will depend on local needs. It should require continued work over a period

of time. Some examples could be Literacy program for street children, Mitigating Waterlogging problem in a village, cleaning up water bodies in a village, Agricultural work, etc.

There are a variety of activities possible within the framework of the above four broad themes. Some examples have been given above, a few more illustrative programs are given below.

Helping classmates, helping persons in distress, helping parents and siblings, spending time with senior persons - reading books and newspapers for them or entertaining them with songs and performances, etc., and also trying to learn lessons and skills for life from them, are of a “Personal Service” nature.